

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

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INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY OECD PARIS

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SUBJ: FOURTH MEET OF THE MTN TROPICAL PRODUCTS GROUP, FEB

16-18

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REF: STATE 35177, STATE 31557 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: TROPICAL PRODUCTS GROUP HELD ITS FOURTH SESSION FEB 16-18 AND ADOPTED FLEXIBLE PROCEDURES FOR CIRCULATION OF OFFERS AND AGREED ON BILATERAL AND PLURILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS IN INTERIM BETWEEN TABLING OF OFFERS AND NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED IN JUNE. AGREEMENT PERMITS PRESENTATION OF OFFERS EITHER IN FORM OF ONE GLOBAL OFFER CIRCULATED TO ALL PARTICIPANTS OR THROUGH BILATERAL NOTIFICATION OF GENERAL OFFERS AFFECTING EACH REQUESTING COUNTRY (OR OTHER AFFECTED PARTICIPANT) ON THE BASIS OF TRADE INTEREST. THE GATT SECRETARIAT WILL CIRCULATE GLOBAL OFFER LISTS OF OFFERING COUNTRIES BY MAY 15 BUT NOT AUTHORIZED TO CONSOLIDATE THESE LISTS. IMPORTANT PROVISIONS OF THE CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY WHICH ARE QUOTED BELOW WERE NEGOTIATED WITH SOME DIFFICULTY (FULL TEXT SEPTEL TOMORROW). LDC STATEMENTS IN GENERAL EXPRESSED APPREHENSION THAT OFFERS MAY BE INSUFFICIENT. END SUMMARY

1. FLEXIBLE PROCEDURE FOR CIRCULATION OF OFFERS IS CONTAINED IN PARAS 7-9 OF CHAIRMAN'S SUMMING UP. PARA 7 READS AS FOLLOWS BEGIN QUOTE: COUNTRIES HAVING RECEIVED REQUEST LISTS WILL PRESENT GLOBAL INITIAL OFFER LISTS FOR CIRCULATION TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE GROUP "TROPICAL PRODUCTS". END QUOTE PARA 8 PROVIDES AN ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURE FOR THOSE COUNTRIES WHICH PREFER TO RESPOND BILATERALLY TO PARTICIPANTS BASED ON TRADE INTEREST. PARA 8 READS BEGIN QUOTE: COUNTRIES WHICH ARE NOT IN A POSITION TO DO THIS AT THE OUTSET WILL PRESENT INITIAL OFFER LISTS TO EACH REQUESTING COUNTRY ADDING INFORMATION ON ITEMS IN WHICH SUCH A REQUESTING COUNTRY MAY HAVE A TRADE INTEREST EVEN WHERE THESE ARE NOT INCLUDED IN ITS REQUEST LISTS. THE LIST WILL BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE SECRETARIAT OR COPIES OF EACH LIST DEPOSITED WITH THE SECRETARIAT. END QUOTE. THE US, JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, AND NEW ZEALAND EXPRESSED A PREFERENCE FOR THIS LATTER PROCEDURE WHILE EC, THE NORDIC COUNTRIES, CANADA, AND SWITZERLAND ARE EXPECTED TO PRESENT A SINGLE GLOBAL LIST FOR CIRCULATION TO ALL PARTICIPANTS PER PARA 7 PROCEDURES.

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2. PARA 9, BEGIN QUOTE: ANY PARTICIPANT SHALL BE ENTITLED TO OBTAIN INFORMATION DIRECTLY OR THROUGH THE SECRETARIAT FROM AN OFFER-MAKING COUNTRY ON ANY ITEM INCLUDED IN THE LIST OF REQUESTS IN WHICH IT CONSIDERS IT HAS AN INTEREST. END QUOTE, RESPONDS TO LDC CONCERN THAT WITHOUT GENERAL CIRCULATION OF OFFERS THEY WOULD BE UNAWARE OF DISPOSITION OF OFFERS ON ITEMS OF POTENTIAL TRADE INTEREST. THIS PARA WAS AGREED TO AFTER CONSIDERABLE NEGOTIATION AND A SECRETARIAT

STATEMENT (CONFIRMED OUTSIDE THE MEETING) THAT IT WOULD SEEK APPROVAL OF OFFERING COUNTRY BEFORE MAKING INFORMATION AVAILABLE. UNDERSTANDING ALSO ACHIEVED IN GROUP THAT REQUESTS WOULD BE BASED ON TRADE INTERESTS. COMMENT: REQUEST FOR AND RESPONSES TO INFORMATION WILL HAVE TO BE HANDLED WITH SENSITIVITY BY BOTH DC'S AND LDC'S TO AVOID PRESSURE TO RECONVENE THE GROUP BEFORE JUNE. END COMMENT

3. AGREED FORMAT FOR OFFERS INCLUDES THE TARIFF ITEM NUMBER, THE PRODUCT DESCRIPTION, THE DUTY RATES OR RATES APPLICABLE, AND THE CONCESSION OFFERED. IT IS ONLY NECESSARY TO TREAT ITEMS ON WHICH OFFERS ARE BEING MADE.

4. PROVISIONS FOR BILATERAL OR PLURILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS TO ELUCIDATE OFFERS AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE AGREED TO BY THE GROUP. NO NEW GUIDELINES WERE ADOPTED FOR PLURILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS (MEANING THAT THEY CAN ONLY OCCUR WITH AGREEMENT OF ALL PARTICIPANTS CONCERNED).

5. THE SECRETARIAT WILL CIRCULATE BY MAY 15 LISTS OF OFFERS BY ALL OFFER-MAKING COUNTRIES AS RECEIVED WITHOUT SUMMARIZING OR CONSOLIDATING THEM IN ANY WAY. ANOTHER MEETING WILL BE HELD IN JUNE TO:

(A) REVIEW THE STATUS OF THE OFFERS AND THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE;
(B) EXAMINE ANY POINTS CONCERNING THE SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE OFFERS WHICH MAY BE BROUGHT UP BY PARTICIPANTS;
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(C) DISCUSS ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FINALIZATION OF CONCESSIONS ON TROPICAL PRODUCTS HAVING REGARD FOR THE CHAIRMAN'S SUMMING UP OF DEC 1975; AND
(D) CONSIDER ANY QUESTIONS COVERED BY PARAS 1(V), 1(IX), AND 2(III) OF THE GUIDELINES RELATING TO SPECIAL AND PRIORITY TREATMENT.

6. OTHER AGENDA ITEMS: MEETING OPENED WITH A REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS TO DATE OF BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. MOST DC'S MADE FACTUAL STATEMENTS OF NUMBER OF CONSULTATIONS HELD, RECONFIRMED THEIR INTENTION TO TABLE OFFERS MAR 1 AS AGREED IN OCT, AND POINTED TO LACK OF INFORMATION ON MOST NTB'S NOTIFIED AND PROBLEM CAUSED BY CONTINUING SUBMISSION OF BOTH REVISED AND ADDITIONAL REQUEST LISTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. LDC'S EXPRESSED APPREHENSION CONCERNING PRELIMINARY SUBSTANTIVE REACTIONS TO THEIR REQUESTS WHICH CENTERED AROUND FOLLOWING THREE AREAS:
(A) EXCLUSION OF SOME DC'S OF ITEMS IN BTN

CHAPTERS 25-99 WHICH THEY LINKED TO TARIFF ESCALATION

PROBLEMS;

(B) EXCLUSION OF OFFERS ON NON-TARIFF BARRIERS

BY SOME DC'S; AND

(C) THE FACT THAT SOME DC'S WERE SEEKING RECIPROCITY

IN TP CONTEXT; LDC'S STRESSED THEIR INTERPRETATION THEY
REQUIRED ONLY TO CONTRIBUTE TO RESULTS OF MTN (MEXICO,

ECUADOR, INDIA). CULBERT

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